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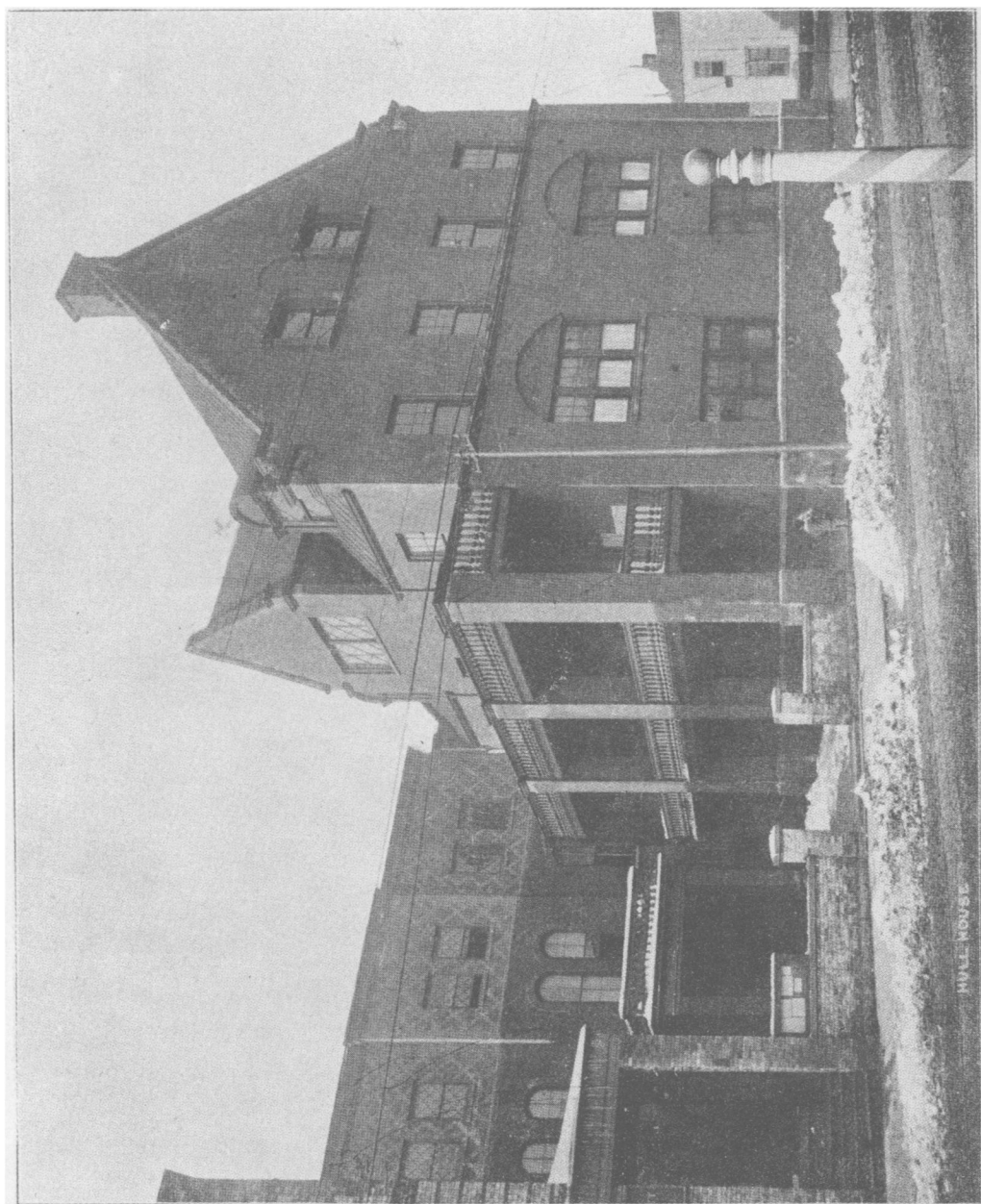
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MILL HOUSE

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A DAY AT HULL HOUSE.

“On montrait sa maison à quiconque avait besoin de quelque chose.”

THE old house is almost submerged. With its hooded top story of fanciful brick, and its large flanking of additions to right and left, there remain but the long windows and wide doorway to hint of the aspect that was its own in the long-gone privacy of the estate of which it was an important and hospitable part in the quiet days before the invasion of crowd and hurry and competition. The house justly retains the name of its original owner.

These additions are more intrinsic than external—growing out of growing needs—and therefore present in themselves a kind of rough estimate or history of them. Thus, the most extensive area and the highest wall belong to the Children's Building, on the right flank, the corresponding smaller wing being used for lecture and class rooms, with dormitory space above. Following again the analogy of need, with the growth of the work came an extension of the commissary and economic bases, so that the coffeehouse, the model bakery and kitchen occupy a generous surface behind the central house, having appropriately above them the constant but not uncheerful noises of the gymnasium and club rooms for the men.

This can be but a suggestion of locality, for under the various roofs are harbored many variations of effort, placing

themselves according to a natural convenience, and adding to themselves in slow accretions, much as the function adds its tool, the organ.

A few fortunate open spaces, bare or bricked as they are, defend the mass of buildings from the dread likeness to an institution. The playground porches of the Children's Building, where there are flowers up to the last moment, and the easy-going aspect of the outside benches and their frequenters, help out the welcome.

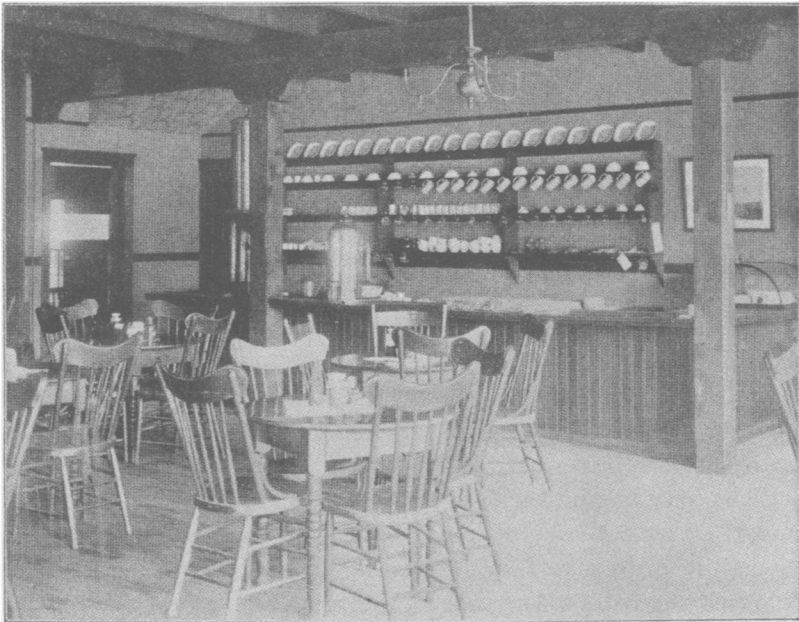
The house has suffered a variety of nomenclature. To the children it is usually and comprehensively "the Kindergarten;" the Italian neighbors with their invincible poetry call it "la casa di Dio," while in spite of its own simply chosen name of a social settlement, to most of its immediate friends and to many at a remote distance it is the place "where Miss Addams lives;" for this name has come to have a generic meaning, and stands for a real presence to many who have no personal or visual knowledge of her.

To those who must have a definition of a thing whose being is essentially plastic, there is no better reply to be given than that of a young Englishman at a conference of good people. Upon being pestered for an exact statement he burst out with: "Why, hang it, madam, we settle." It is the personality of the "settlers" which determines the character of each group, and forms differ with their environment. The one necessary element is permanency. Individuals come and go; the attitude, the movement, the activity remain. Hull House itself is not unlike a rock of permanence, about which the tide of population flows and shifts and changes, bringing to it and taking away, altering it and wearing it into certain forms, but feeling it always firmly based, or as one of its neighbors expressed it "well grounded in the mud." This was at once a statement and a compliment.

About the house are its tributaries, some in material form and some visible only in spirit. Around the southern corner is a brick building, the home of the Jane Club, an active club of working women who in a life of five years have solved some of

the most vexing questions of coöperative living to their own social and economic satisfaction.

Across the street to the north is the pleasant two-story frame building of the Phalanx Club, where the same plan of living,



except for the cares of the kitchen, is carried on by the young men. Just north of this is the model lodging house for women, where any dependent woman may have the wise encouragement of a bed and a breakfast. Some thousand feet toward the river is the public playground, safely guarded by its iron fence and closed until after school hours. This piece of land, cursed by a bunch of miserable and criminal tenements and an absentee landlord, came finally by strange and picturesque ways into the hands of the settlement, and now clean and clear and wholesome, it has seen many a good time. May poles and singing children and flowers and music have surprised its sandy surface and in winter it gets a coating of ice for the skaters. And

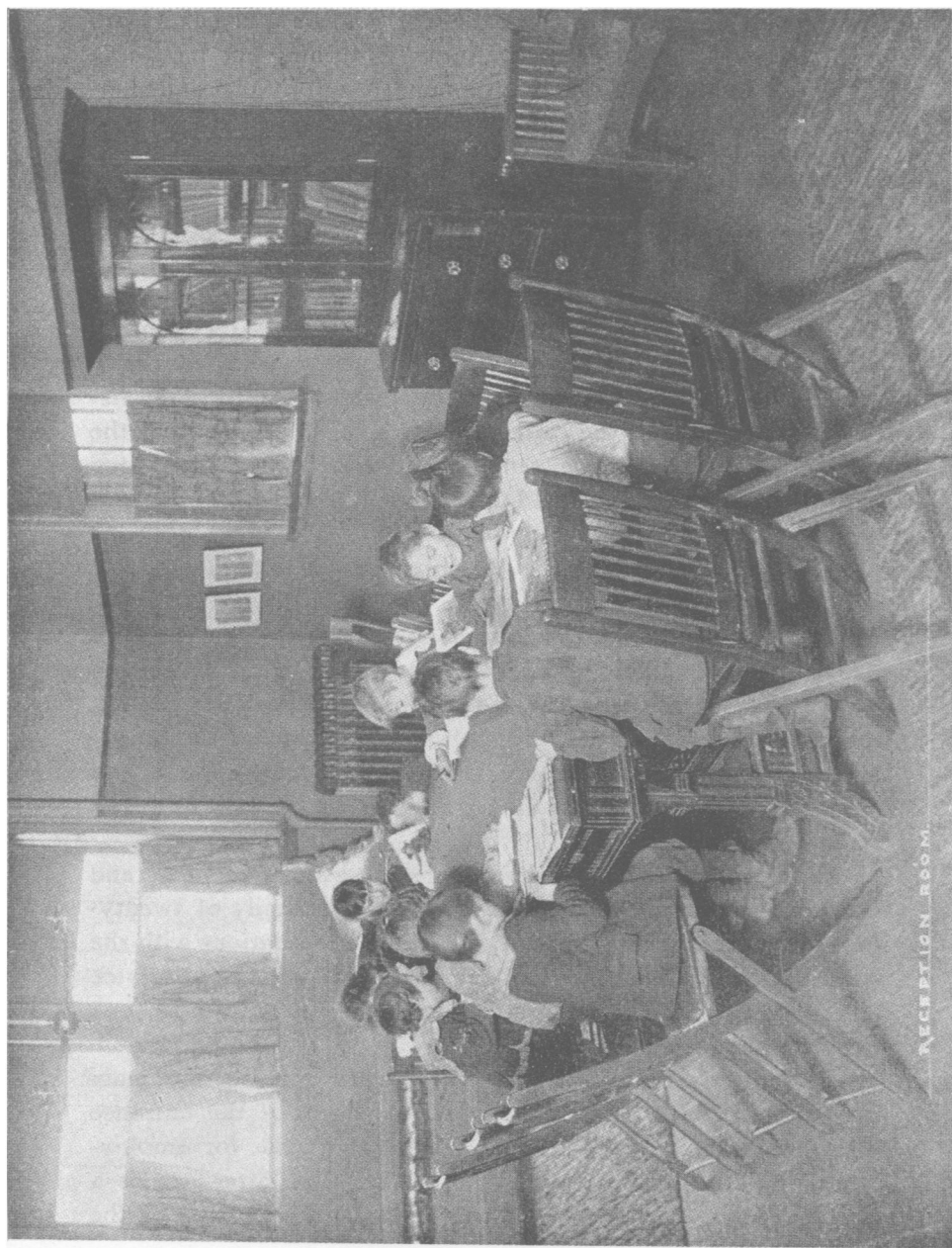
always it is the place where the crowded children may breathe and run and shout in safety. Away down toward the southeast and off to the northwest are large study clubs of young men and women whose literary life began under the roof of the house and who have outgrown her first care.

The public-library reading room on Blue Island avenue, the public baths a few blocks away, the popular lectures now being given in one of the public schools were initiated by the settlement. The decoration of public schoolrooms, which is so novel and lovely a thing, is now carried on by the Society of Art in Schools, of which Miss Starr was the founder and of which she is president.

And somewhere about, as one might say within calling distance, in little rooms at least warm and clean and rent free, are a dozen elderly women, for whom through one of its residents the house has laid forever the specter of the county poorhouse. Some, it is true, came to curse but remained to pray, and all preserve the freedom of the beneficiary relation by generous criticism or approval.

The day begins early with the paper carrier, who hides his impartial list of daily papers under the mat for safety. He meets the earliest working mother—or possibly father—who is bringing the baby to the crèche, where an average of twenty-five little ones are cared for every day. This means spending the day under wise supervision, with pictures and toys; it means bread and milk eaten at a tiny table in company; it means the neatness of a bath and the sweetness of a nap in a little white bed all to oneself; it means the big porch playground with bright red geraniums on its border, and an exciting squirrel and a placable parrot at the ends. So may these good hours of the waking day make all the others but a sleep and a forgetting.

Below the crèche is a larger room where the elder babies may play at serious kindergarten, alleviated by a sand-pile and a monstrous doll's house, and still above is the larger room for the older class.



RECEPTION ROOM.

By half-past seven o'clock the coffeehouse and bakery are well astir. In the latter, rosy "Annie" is turning out her quota of brown and white loaves, with a minor detail of pies and shining rolls. When the coffeehouse was opened, with its stained rafters, its fine photographs, and its rows of blue china mugs, it had a reflective visit from one of its neighbors. He looked it over thoroughly and without prejudice, and said decisively: "Yez kin hev de shovel gang or yez kin hev de office gang, but yez can't hev 'em both in the same room at the same toime." Time has shown the exactness of the statement. Its clientele, increasing with its increasing efficiency, have selected themselves, and it is not the man in overalls who is the constant visitor, but the teacher, the clerk, and the smaller employer of the region. The laboring man sends his children for bread and soup and prepared food, but seldom comes himself, however well within his means the fare may be.

Here the residents of the house are served with a movable feast according to their uprisings. The quiet young inspector, whose work in the narrow alleys has changed them as by a daily miracle, is likely to be the first. Then come those who bear a divided burden; the factory inspector and her deputy, the librarian, the students, and the two schoolboys of the household. These are gone before those appear whose clubs and classes have kept them late the night before at the task of guide, philosopher, and friend.

From the coffeehouse are also served the luncheon and dinner for the house dining room, so that the family of twenty-four are placed in direct social and economic relations with the common kitchen, and the "belated industry" of private service is dispensed with. The domestic economy is all under one skilled management.

Leaving the coffeehouse by a covered way to the main building, one finds the large room on the right of the entrance already filled with applicants to the labor bureau for employment, or to the relief department for aid. The latter acts as a clearing house for organized aids except in the case of the

friends with whom the house has summered and wintered. These receive help as freely as they would give in their turn.

Now the house is like some creature slowly awakening from sleep. It begins to put out its hands, touching, it is believed, with



humility as well as hopefulness and trust the lives of those about it. By nine o'clock the visiting nurse may be seen packing her bag from her supply chest with the little mercies of lint and salve and baby food. The workers whose province lies outside, who see sick children, study racial needs through manners, foods, and customs, visit the police stations in search of the astray girl or boy, or minister to some special necessity, are beginning their rounds. In the octagon, which is a kind of open sanctuary, the heads of the house are attacking, with a patience born of long usage, the unmitigable mail of the morning.

By two in the afternoon the kindergarten training class is filling the largest room of the children's building, the lively and

wide-awake session of the Woman's Club is at its climax, the gymnasium is mildly noisy with its afternoon classes of girls, and from far up in the upper story come sounds of the children's chorus.

The applicants for employment make way—with intervals for ventilation—to the children's sewing class which comes tumultuously from school. Here and there, in corners slightly secluded, are single pupils—a bright boy out of working hours getting up his Greek for college, an elderly Russian plodding slowly along some bit of English text, or an eager young Jew making the crooked ways of his letters straight—all this with assistance of someone in the house.

The six o'clock dinner hour brings the household and its guests together in the beautiful dining room. This is the meeting ground of the day. Here the generalizations of the over young are discouraged with kindness and qualifying facts; here are the all-experienced induced to reconsider and admit another fact of the great truth; here is the free play of the individual with enough of friction to stimulate and enough of the juice of humor to sweeten. Thus the social consciousness of the living house grows. There may be a very radical end or a very conservative middle at the long oval but there is always a fair field and fair play.

In this general life the private affairs of the residents become shadowy, yet mothers have been seen there plainly visiting their children; men have been known to come with motives not severely altruistic; there have actually been engagements, and to an interested friend from the far West who asked breathlessly, "Do they marry?" one might answer with truth, "Often, alas! often."

The leisurely last moments of the dinner hour are apt to be invaded by the classes, and from now on there is a riot of young people. The studious—and there are many—attend the Extension classes, which cover almost the entire ground of the teaching branches, ranging from clay modeling to psychology, from grammar to Dante, from embroidery to trigonometry. The younger and gayer crowd, the dancing and



CHILD ROOM OF CECILIA

dramatic clubs, the gymnasium with its games and basketball, claim a share of all.

Each club, no matter how lightly social, has its own sober meeting once a month, when it listens to some lecture or informal talk. The club names range from the purely ornamental through the descriptive to the utilitarian. There is "The Violet," "The Study," and "The Fourth of July Mandolin." A favorite custom is to enshrine the name of some hero or heroine, local or general, whereby Henry Clay and Clara Barton appear in friendly competition.

The Penny Provident Bank, which opens at night from seven to eight, is an importation from New York. Supplies of bank-books and stamps come from the parent institution, and there the deposits are finally redeemed. The system is one of great simplicity. The child exchanges his coin for a stout manilla book ruled in squares suitable for the stamp. This he signs with his name and address, receiving a stamp of the value of his coin. The money may be withdrawn at any time after it reaches the sum of fifty cents. Any impulse to reckless spending of a lesser sum is discouraged by the mulcting of five cents from the amount drawn. Visitors to the house find the bank, with its eager tangible depositors, full of vital interest; even more so, however, are the weekly meetings of the Social Science Club. These have gone on steadily for seven years and represent in an astonishing manner the "American spirit"

"That bids him flout the Law he makes,
That bids him make the Law he flouts."

Speakers of every opinion and circumstance have come before this body, have said their say—not always undisputed, not always courteously received—until now the test of all real love of knowing can be put to it—for it seeks to make welcome not opinion but knowledge.

The lights linger in the gymnasium, which is also the theater and assembly room, but at midnight the kindly "special officer" sees them going out until all is dark. If some restless resident sits up with a problem, or wakens at every clanging car bell, he

also waits to serve, for calls for the doctor or telegraph boys temper the night to the general average of the ward.

To speak of the external activities of the house; its holiday entertainments, its Sunday lectures and concerts, its summer



vacation home and school, its lendings of pictures and books, its art exhibits, its maps and records, would be but an extension of its inner life. To describe its attitude toward the school, the saloon, and the church, to interpret its action in regard to strikes, arbitration, and municipal politics, would be to attempt its psychology. What has been here presented is the method alone.

Hull House stands not so much for a solution of problems as a place of exchange. The demands which are brought to it are varied enough. One man wants to be "shown the sense of poetry," another wants his wife "converted to the evangelical religion" for the sake of a peaceful fireside, and a third wants—just the patrol wagon. One mother leaves her baby "while she goes to the matinee," and another hopes to find her boy, arrested she knows not where, for what, or by whom. Often the effort put forth in return is unwise or inadequate, but the exchange is the vital thing. This is the heart of the movement. This is the reason of the settlement; the rest is pure façade. This only can destroy the artificial, and justify its life. It must help that direct human touch of richer with poorer, wise with simple, learned with untaught, dynamic with static which has for its aim the realization by all the children of their kinship with the great family.

DOROTHEA MOORE.

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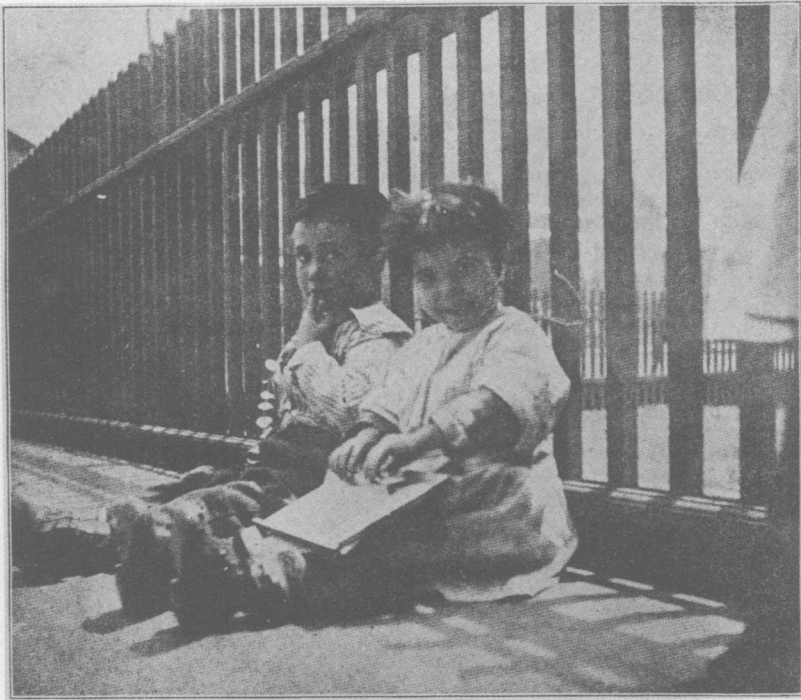
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